

Serial No: 09/956,916

Art Unit: 1762

Amendments to Specification

Please amend paragraph 00128 as follows:

[00128] Figure 3d, Figure 4d, Figure 5d, Figure 6d, Figure 7d, Figure 8d and Figure 9d show the FTIR spectra of PECVD silica films deposited using a commercially available PECVD system, the "Concept One" system manufactured by Novellus Systems in California, USA, using the fixed optimum total deposition pressure and the fixed flow rates of silane (SiH_4), of nitrous oxide (N_2O), of nitrogen (N_2), and of phosphine (PH_3) as described in our co-pending US patent application serial no. 09/799,491. These spectra are obtained after 30 minutes thermal treatments in a nitrogen ambient at various temperatures in a standard diffusion tube.

~~It is clear that this new patent application describes a way to independently optimize The present invention permits the thermal treatment and the optical properties of the buffer, core and cladding to be optimized so as to minimize mechanical stress as to allow the thermal treatment optimization of the mechanical properties of induced in the silica-based optical elements without any interaction with affecting their the optical properties stable of these optical elements.~~